

We Claim:

1. A method for decorating a surface of an edible substrate with a defined pattern of pellet shaped candy pieces comprising the steps of:

(a) introducing a plurality of pellet shaped candy pieces to a hopper mounted on a conveyor, said conveyor having a plurality of carrier bars and wherein at least one grouping of said plurality of carrier bars has pockets for receiving the pellet shaped candy pieces and said pockets in said grouping of carrier bars are arranged to form a predetermined defined pattern;

(b) receiving the pellet shaped candy pieces in said pockets;

(c) transporting the pellet shaped candy pieces in said pockets to a transfer station; and

(d) transferring said pellet shaped candy pieces from said pockets to the surface of the edible substrate while maintaining said predetermined defined pattern and affixing said pellet shaped candy pieces to the surface of the edible substrate in said predetermined defined pattern.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said edible substrate is a confectionery or baked good and said surface of said substrate is substantially planar.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein said edible substrate is a chocolate tablet.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the surface of said chocolate tablet has recesses for receiving said pellet shaped candy pieces and said recesses form a pattern corresponding to said predetermined pattern.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein said pellet shaped candy pieces are affixed to said recesses with an edible glue.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein said glue is selected from the group consisting of chocolate, sugar syrup, corn syrup, starch and gum.

7. The method according to claim 4, wherein each recess of said chocolate tablet contains a chocolate nub at a bottom of said recess and wherein each chocolate nub is heated to a temperature effective to cause said chocolate nubs to assist in securing said candy pieces in said recesses.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein said conveyor is a ramp type conveyor.

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein said conveyor is a drum type conveyor.

10. The method according to claim 8, wherein said transfer station is comprised of suction elements for picking up and releasing said pellet shaped candy pieces and said suction elements are arranged in a pattern corresponding to said predetermined defined pattern.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein said edible substrate is transported on an edible substrate conveyor proximate to said transfer station.

12. The method according to claim 9, wherein said pockets for receiving the pellet shaped candy pieces have a vacuum communicating outlet.

13. The method according to claim 12, wherein said drum conveyor is positioned above and proximate to an edible substrate conveyor system.

14. The method according to claim 13, wherein said transfer station is a point where said edible substrate conveyor system forms a tangent to said drum conveyor.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein said pellet shaped candy pieces received in said pockets are subject to a vacuum and said vacuum is

discontinued when said pellet shaped candy pieces reach said tangent.

16. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of printing an image on said pellet shaped candy pieces located in said pockets.

17. A chocolate tablet having a defined pattern of pellet shaped candy pieces on a surface thereof prepared by the process comprising the steps of:

(a) introducing a plurality of pellet shaped candy pieces to a hopper mounted on a conveyor, said conveyor having a plurality of carrier bars and wherein at least one grouping of said plurality of carrier bars has pockets for receiving the pellet shaped candy pieces and said pockets in said grouping of carrier bars are arranged to form a predetermined defined pattern;

(b) receiving the pellet shaped candy pieces in said pockets;

(c) transporting the pellet shaped candy pieces in said pockets to a transfer station; and

(d) transferring said pellet shaped candy pieces from said pockets to the surface of the chocolate tablet while maintaining said

predetermined defined pattern and affixing said pellet shaped candy pieces to the surface of the chocolate tablet in said predetermined defined pattern.

18. An apparatus for decorating a surface of an edible substrate with a defined pattern of pellet shaped candy pieces, said apparatus comprising"

- (a) a hopper for holding a plurality of pellet shaped candy pieces mounted on a conveyor, said conveyor having a plurality of carrier bars, wherein at least one grouping of said plurality of carrier bars has pockets for receiving the pellet shaped candy pieces and said pockets in said grouping of carrier bars are arranged to form a predetermined defined pattern;
- (b) a transfer station positioned proximate to said conveyor for transferring said pellet shaped candy pieces from said pockets to the surface of the edible substrate while maintaining said predetermined defined patterns; and
- (c) an edible substrate conveyor for delivering said edible substrates to said transfer station.

19. The apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said conveyor is a ramp type conveyor.

20. The apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said conveyor is a drum type conveyor.

21. The apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said transfer station is comprised of suction elements for picking up and releasing said pellet shaped candy pieces.

22. The apparatus according to claim 18, further comprising a printing station for printing on said pellet shaped candy pieces while positioned in said pockets.